



KANSAS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

September 15, 2004

Sent by facsimile

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

I was pleased to learn yesterday that the Senate approved an amendment to the Homeland Security appropriations bill that will make \$2.9 billion in emergency assistance available to farmers and ranchers who sustained losses in 2003 and 2004 as a result of natural disasters.

The amendment was prompted by your request that Congress approve \$3.1 billion in disaster assistance for Florida producers impacted by recent hurricanes. I agree that hurricane damage to property and crops in Florida is devastating and that monetary help is warranted. However, producers in Kansas and other Midwest and western states have struggled for years to remain viable despite a long-term drought and other damaging weather events.

One-time catastrophic weather events like hurricanes leave a clear path of destruction. We saw similar damage in Kansas this year from hail, high winds, tornadoes and flooding. On August 23, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman declared 10 Kansas counties primary agricultural disaster areas as a result of these catastrophic weather events.

Drought can be just as damaging as hail or a tornado, but it's more insidious in its destruction. There are no weather alerts to predict when the devastation will occur and no onslaught of media to document the aftermath, but it's devastating nonetheless. Kansas producers, especially those in northwest Kansas, have documented crop losses for at least the last four years. On Aug. 23, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman declared 34 Kansas counties primary agricultural disaster areas as a result of drought.

In 2003, all Kansas counties were either classified as primary agricultural disaster areas or they were contiguous to a declared county.

Crop production losses are devastating regardless of their cause, and Kansas producers deserve equal access to the disaster aid you are seeking on Florida's behalf. Apparently, many others in the U.S. Senate feel the same way, because the amendment that passed yesterday had strong bipartisan support.

As the Homeland Security funding bill works its way through conference committee on its way to your desk for your signature, I ask that you support emergency assistance for farmers and ranchers in all states that have been adversely impacted by natural disasters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen Sebelius". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Kathleen Sebelius
Governor of Kansas

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Adrian J. Polansky". The signature is cursive and stylized, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Adrian J. Polansky
Kansas Secretary of Agriculture